

# IOWA BIRD LIFE

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## IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

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## WHAT PROMOTES BIRD STUDY?\*

By ARTHUR J. PALAS

Postville, Iowa

It occurs to all of us that there are two excellent avenues open which we should use more and more if we want to increase the study of any form of wild life. These two ways are by teaching in our schools and by publicity in our publications, newspapers, magazines and books.

During the past fifteen years there has been a greatly increasing interest by educators in the study of the natural sciences. Demands and necessity for conservation have brought some legislation that is good. Discussions have aroused a greater interest by the public, which is reflected by the courses offered by our educational institutions, from grade schools up. But we must not sit still and think that things are going well just because we have had some good legislation and because nature subjects receive more attention in our schools. These facts alone are not proof that things are better. Our greater means of communication and education have brought many more people into contact with all phases of wild life. It is quite likely that, even during the time that education and legislation have made steps forward in the teaching of the natural sciences and in conservation, the forces of destruction have gone forward at even a greater rate. Seemingly we have gone forward, but actually we have gone backward, if we have not kept pace with the forces of destruction. Let us not be misled to think that we have made sufficient progress and all we need to do is to retain our present program. That is not likely to be sufficient.

The same reasons that demand a greater prominence of the natural sciences in the curriculums of our educational institutions also demand a more important place for these subjects in our publications. Readers of 'Iowa Bird Life' are found in most, if not all, of the 99 counties of the State and some one or more of these readers comes into contact with every newspaper of the State. We could do more than we are now doing to get proper publicity and articles of educational and informational value before the reading public. Many of our members could write articles of educational and literary merit. Publishers are glad to get facts regarding nature subjects and are thankful for worth-while contributions. Such articles should not be a series of teaching and preaching. The main theme in them should be to give interesting information regarding wild life. Unless we first get the readers' interest in our subject, our teaching and preaching may cause the indifferent among them to become more callous. Lessons of conservation, as a rule, should be woven in without standing out as the features of the articles. Only after we have gained sympathetic readers by items of human interest should we attempt to "bear down" by making direct statements as to what may and what may not be done.

There is another very important agency or medium for fostering or promoting bird study, and that is by means of study clubs. About this I wish to write more fully.

We have in Iowa about 205 cities of over 1,000 population each. Ten of these cities have over 25,000. All of these ten cities have had bird clubs at some time and half of them have active clubs at this time. Ten active clubs should be where there are five at this time. Each of these cities has enough bird students who would like to be members of such a club, and each has several bird students who are qualified to organize and direct it. If organized, clubs could be successful in all of them.

\*This was the theme of a talk by Mr. Palas at the Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union, Fairfield, Iowa, May 8, 1936.—Ed.

It strikes me as odd that there should not be a single active club at this time within the ten cities that have a population each of from 10,000 to 25,000. If one of these cities has a bird club at this time, I have not been informed. I cannot account for it. I am convinced that each of these cities also has enough interested persons to assure an efficient club and that each has several efficient leaders among such interested persons. How can the citizens of such splendid cities as Fort Dodge and Mason City, naming two of the larger in the group, perform their civic obligations without active bird clubs? Presumably, the bird students of Ames and Iowa City think that the numerous activities centering around the large educational institutions would interfere with the success of bird clubs there. Such should not be the case. I think that clubs, if organized in these two locations, would be especially efficient because of the facilities of doing unusual work. It is my opinion that at least eight clubs should be functioning in this second group of ten cities.

It is of interest that in the 15 cities of from 5,000 to 10,000 we have usually had, and we now have, several clubs that have done and are doing efficient work and have a beneficial influence in their localities. Possibly we can find some reasons why this should be. These cities are not so large that other activities crowd out the nature study clubs. On the other hand, the cities seem to be large enough to supply good leaders and seem to have sufficient numbers of persons interested to make for efficient clubs. Again, these cities seem to be small enough so that people of like interests get acquainted and join in like activities. If such are the reasons why bird study clubs thrive in this group of cities, then surely they should be a success in the larger cities. In the larger cities the activity of a few leaders will bring the interested people together. They will respond if they are asked. In this group of 15 cities we should have at least ten clubs instead of four.



MR. PALAS, author of this article, was one of the organizers of our Union. He is a lawyer at Postville and is too well known to need introduction to our readers.

There have also been some active clubs in the 35 cities ranging from 3,000 to 5,000. We should not expect less than 14 active clubs in this group, which includes such splendid college cities as Decorah, Grinnell, Indianola, Le Mars, Mt. Pleasant, Pella and Storm Lake. It seems that these places should be fertile fields for bird study activities.

Of the 35 cities ranging from 2,000 to 3,000 very few have had bird clubs in the past and I believe that none have any at this time. Certainly eight of this group have enough interested persons to conduct efficient study clubs.

We have not less than 100 cities ranging in population from 1,000 to 2,000. It would be impossible to organize clubs in some of these cities. All of these cities probably have persons who are interested, but few of them have bird students who are willing to devote themselves to the organization work. There could well be ten active clubs in this group. If a city has one or more persons in it who are willing to think birds and conservation 365 days in the year then a club should be possible. There should then be enough other people interested to conduct the club activities.

What can we do to get 60 active clubs into these 205 cities of Iowa? It may be that when we come to cities of less than 5,000 population, and even in some of the larger places, a more successful club would be one devoted to nature study generally, including the study of flowers, trees, mammals, etc., as well as birds. Such clubs would



have larger memberships and it would be easier to arrange for programs and study topics.

To organize a club you will need an ambition to do something for the community. But it will not be all unselfish. You will also be doing yourself a good service. The fact that such clubs are often short-lived should not discourage us for the club has done good while it has been active.

If you have two or three friends in your city who are interested, talk the matter over with them. Write for information or suggestions on how to organize. Invite all interested persons to a meeting at which you should have a rousing talk on the needs for such a club. Get an outside speaker if necessary, but it is still better if you can call on a speaker from your own group. The work consists of eight or nine programs a year. For one or two of these programs you may want an outside speaker, but do not overload with outside talent. Your success will depend much on local talent and local work. You should arrange for field trips to make it practical. After you are in the work there will open up to you opportunity for civic endeavors, but such work should primarily be devoted to objects of conservation.

Why do I stress the importance of local clubs? The work of a large number of local clubs would greatly contribute to the cause of conservation in this State. Such clubs make a community bird-conscious, nature-conscious, conservation-conscious. They provide a forum where nature study problems may be worked out, a center where nature knowledge may be disseminated, an agency where nature information may be obtained. Such clubs promote a community interest in educational endeavors; they encourage ambitions for worth-while accomplishments; they focus attention upon activities that are uplifting; they make for the ideal in citizenship.

### LOCAL BIRD CLUBS IN IOWA

Mr. Palas has given very good suggestions for organizing the local bird club. We are presenting here brief accounts of the various bird clubs in Iowa. Affiliation of local bird clubs with the Iowa Ornithologists' Union has long been our hope, but as yet a workable plan has not been formulated. Such affiliation would prove of mutual benefit and in bringing it about we should have a genuine achievement. Other state organizations have their local "chapters." There is need for such in Iowa!

**The Atlantic Bird Club.**—This Club was organized in 1924 by the late Thomas H. Whitney, a well-known banker. Mr. Whitney induced many of his friends and their families to join the club. Many were interested in birds; others joined because Mr. Whitney as one of our leading citizens wanted them to join. After his passing the organization dwindled to a small group of eight or ten persons who were seriously interested in birds. The writer was elected president and served for a few years; Mrs. Billy Williams now holds the office. We were able to interest a number of our school teachers, who are among our enthusiastic members. Two ministers are also members. We have felt that the way to reach the children is through their instructors. We now have a number of bird clubs scattered through the schools. We supplied the material for a martin house to be built by the recreation group. The house is to be erected in one of our parks. We now have 32 members, all workers who are thoroughly interested. We have been holding a May bird hike and breakfast for the last few years, going out early in the morning and returning to my home for breakfast and later comparison of the bird lists obtained. There are few homes without bird baths and feeding stations for the winter birds. And much interest has been aroused among those who do not have time to join us.—MRS. ARTHUR LEE, Atlantic, Iowa.

**A Junior Club at Cedar Falls.**—In March of this year I organized a Junior Audubon Club. That we might derive the greatest benefit from field trips, I selected a small group of ten girls and boys, most of whom live in the neighborhood. In their enthusiasm they brought their little friends to the meetings. They were eager to join, and now we have 20 members. We go on field trips when the weather permits, each child keeping a list of birds seen and heard. Sometimes I have the boys meet one day and the girls on another day, which takes more of the leader's time but it is well worth while. Sometimes we meet at my home, and while coloring bird pictures we discuss the residence, migration, food and habits of our subjects. The interest and enthusiasm of young bird lovers will be an inspiration and delight to any leader.—MRS. RAY S. DIX, Cedar Falls, Iowa.

**The Cedar Rapids Bird Club.**—We were unable to secure a sketch of this club. It was organized about 1931 or earlier, at the time Professor Kubichek was teaching at Coe College and was very active in Iowa bird matters. Since that time it has held interesting meetings and has served a useful purpose in and about Cedar Rapids. In 1931 the Iowa Ornithologists' Union held its annual meeting in the city, as guest of the Cedar Rapids Bird Club. Those of us in attendance recall the fine entertainment and hospitality given us by members of the club. Prominent among the members have been W. F. Kubichek, Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Petranek, Miss Lillian Serbousek, Miss Myra Willis, Miss Lavina Dragoo, Miss Copp, Mrs. C. C. Flodin, and others.—F. J. P.

**The Des Moines Audubon Society.**—Our Society was organized in 1923. Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Palas with the coöperation of Mrs. Henry Frankel were foremost among the organizers. Our 1935 membership list shows a total of 103 members with 17 of the charter members still on our roll. Many of the early members dropped out during the first few years. Our meetings and field trips have been held regularly during all these years, and have been fairly well attended. Last fall we had 50 or more at every meeting and 10 or 12 on the field trips. Besides the Brenton's Slough project (described in 'Iowa Bird Life', V, pp. 34-35), we have worked along other lines. We have contributed to a bird book section in the Central Public Library. Mrs. A. B. Funk, who died in July, 1934, owned a great many volumes on birds, which were donated to us by her husband and which we placed in the Library, with a suitable name-plate in each book. Some prominent speakers have appeared before us: William Finley, Walter Bennett, Dr. Arthur A. Allen and others. We have participated in the Christmas bird census every year, and have furnished a good membership to the Iowa Ornithologists' Union. This has been a very fine year, with a lively interest manifested by all.—MRS. TONI R. WENDELBURG, Des Moines, Iowa.

**The Dubuque Bird Club.**—On March 11, 1929, the Dubuque Bird Club was organized at the home of Mrs. R. W. Johnson, with 14 charter members. Since that time meetings have been held once a month, except during the summer, in the Bird Room of the public library. The membership at the present time numbers 20. One annual field trip is made by the club as a whole on a Sunday during warbler week, with many excursions by individual groups of members. Interest in the club has greatly increased even though the membership remains small. Several of the members made a trip last summer to the colony of Black-crowned Night Herons on the Ellis Wilson farm near Waterloo. At different times members have visited the Independence mill-pond described by Mr. Pierce in 'Bird-Lore' in 1929. In October of last year the club held its meeting in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Fred J. Pierce at Winthrop, enjoying his books and bird records and the inspiration of his acquaintance.

The marshes and sloughs about Dubuque offer splendid opportunities for the study of shore birds, and club members are just beginning



to get acquainted with what they contain. Last spring for the first time we saw here the Yellow-headed Blackbird and the Florida Gallinule, as well as the King Rail, Wilson Phalarope, Bittern, a family of Coots, and many others. The Pileated Woodpecker has been seen in the woods near here and the Loon on the river.

Perhaps some time we shall grow enough to be able to entertain the Iowa Ornithologists' Union and benefit by its knowledge and experience in knowing our birds.—MRS. R. W. JOHNSON, Dubuque, Iowa.

**The Fairfield Bird Club.**—The Fairfield Bird Club was organized March 2, 1933. It is, in a measure, a descendant of an older, loosely-formed "Nature Study" club, which, while quite informal in organization, had high ambitions and aspired to attain some knowledge not only of ornithology but also of botany, entomology, physiography, geology and astronomy.

The Club's membership consists of persons of all ages and walks in life and is open to all persons interested. The annual dues are twenty-five cents. Some effort is made to instill in boys and girls of school age a love of the study of birds and of nature. The Club's officers consist of a president, a vice-president and a secretary-treasurer. There are two annually appointed standing committees, a program committee and a "Bird Hike and Browse" committee. Monthly meetings are held, usually on the last Tuesday of each month.

The Fairfield Bird Club and the Fairfield Garden Club have a number of members in common and once each year a joint meeting is held. In 1935 and 1936 this joint meeting was held in Lacey-Keosauqua park, last year on August 28 and this year on August 5.

Field trips are frequent during the months of the spring bird migration, but during the remainder of the year are somewhat sporadic. The Fairfield Bird Club has twice been host to the Iowa Ornithologists' Union, first in the year 1933 on May 5 and 6, and a second time this year on May 8 and 9. The number of different species of birds observed in the composite list from the forenoon field trips on May 6, 1933, was 120, and on May 9, 1936, the number was 136. Fairfield is located in good bird territory.—J. WILBUR DOLE, Fairfield, Iowa.

**The Sioux City Bird Club.**—The history of this Club could not be written without some mention of the two organizations that preceded it. In the fall of 1910, a group of 15 or more interested persons banded together under the leadership of Dr. Guy C. Rich for the purpose of studying the birds of this vicinity. This club was known as the Ornithological Section of the Academy of Science and Letters, the Academy having been organized several years previously. The club ceased to function the following summer, but Rev. Manley B. Townsend, then pastor of the Unitarian Church in Sioux City, organized a new club in the fall of 1911. It was known as the Nature Study Club, and semi-monthly meetings devoted to many different natural history subjects were held during 1911 and 1912.

It was in the summer of 1913 that Miss Adah Hood, W. J. Hayward and Dr. T. C. Stephens, the latter an active member of the first club, made plans for the present organization. The Sioux City Bird Club was started in the fall of 1913. Professor B. H. Bailey of Coe College gave an illustrated bird lecture at the first meeting, on Saturday, October 25, 1913. E. A. Fields was elected the first president, and Miss Adah Hood, secretary. There were 23 charter members. The meetings were held semi-monthly or monthly from September to May, inclusive, and these have continued through the years with some lapses and variations. During 1932 meetings were discontinued due to effects of the depression; they were resumed the following year, and the club is now functioning as formerly. The programs have always been varied and interesting. There have been papers and talks on bird observations in the field at all seasons of the year. The many phases

of bird study and protection have been thoroughly covered in the programs presented at the meetings. The programs illustrated by slides or moving pictures have been the most instructive of all. Besides the talks given at the regular meetings, we have had lecturers of prominence entertain us, among them Ernest Harold Baynes and William Finley. Bird houses made by manual training classes, birds' nests, bird skins and mounted birds have been exhibited for our instruction at the meetings.

Our outside activities have included some extensive and interesting exhibits on birds for the public. These were held at the Library and attracted several hundred people among whom were many school children. The exhibits showed bird houses, sparrow-traps, mounted birds, nests, feeding devices and foods, field glasses, bird photography and bird books. In 1916 a junior bird club with more than 100 members was organized. In an educational campaign senior club members spoke to 3,500 children in the public schools. Arbor Day has been used to bring the subject of birds to the school children. The public press has been used very extensively by our members to further bird study in various ways. Field trips through the entire year have always been a feature of our activities.

As we look back over the work the club has tried to do, we find that many of those who were with us in the early days have gone to other territory, but we feel that there is a place for a Bird Club in our city, and we hope there will always be those who will carry on the good work.—MRS. MARY L. BAILEY, Sioux City, Iowa.

## THE FAIRFIELD BANDING STATION\*

By MALCOLM McDONALD

Although a number of operators have had charge of the Fairfield, Iowa, station, headquarters have always been located at Parsons College. In January, 1931, Professor Carl Welty opened the station on the Parsons College campus, but the misdirected interest of the students soon necessitated a change, and a small, wooded tract known as "Old Settlers Park", just northeast of the city limits, was chosen. Here, during the greater part of each winter and spring since that time, the traps have been set out and operated. Summer months have seen other and more convenient locations utilized. Sub-stations on two chimneys in town have been operated for two years during the Chimney Swift migration.

Malcolm McDonald took over the operation of the station from Professor Welty in September, 1934, and operated it until January, 1936. From September, 1935, until Mr. McDonald closed his connections with the station, the traps were operated by Wesley Bartlett. Since January, Mr. Bartlett has been operating the traps under his own license.

From the chimney-top sub-station 2231 Chimney Swifts have been banded. The Slate-colored Junco is second in line, with 685 individuals banded, and the White-throated Sparrow is third with 425. Altogether during the five years of operation, 4323 individuals of 60 species have been banded. A few of the most interesting species are: American Coot, Lincoln's Sparrow, Wood Thrush, Grasshopper Sparrow, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Migrant Shrike, Red-tailed Hawk, Double-crested Cormorant, Myrtle Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Philadelphia Vireo, Winter Wren, Cedar Waxwing, and Ovenbird.

Baits used are commercial chickfeeds, cracked corn, and suet. At present, a drop trap with a drinking pan for bait is operating very

\*Read at the Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union, Fairfield, Iowa, May 8, 1936, by Wesley H. Bartlett. Manuscript revised by Wesley H. Bartlett and Charles Gilly.



satisfactorily. The type of trap is known as the "Government Sparrow Trap" has proved the most satisfactory of all traps tried. A false-bottom and a funnel-entrance tray types have also given good results.

The drudgery of a banding station has its rewards in the unexpected thrills which break the monotony of the catches. Usually the thrill consists of a return from a previous year, but if it is an extra-special thrill, one may have a "Foreign" return, as the birds banded at some other banding station are called. Then, too, there is the thrill of receiving a postcard announcing that one of "your" birds has been trapped or killed elsewhere.

Repeats, or birds which have been previously captured and banded at the station within the last six months, are very numerous. Some birds seem to develop what has been called the "trap habit", and repeat often. Individuals have been captured, released, and recaptured in another trap farther down the trap line within fifteen minutes after the first capture. Then there are the migrating birds which remain about the station for a lengthy visit. One Song Sparrow repeated 47 times in 49 consecutive days.

Returns are often very interesting. One Cardinal returned at least once a year during five consecutive years. A Junco which was banded in 1931 wearing normal plumage, was recaptured in 1932 and was at this time mottled with large spots of white. In 1934 it was again recaptured, still mottled, but in 1935 the plumage of the bird was again normal. It was also noticed that this bird was much larger than the average junco.

Foreign returns here have been almost entirely limited to Chimney Swifts. We have captured eight Chimney Swifts that have been banded elsewhere—seven of them by Musselman of Quincy, Illinois. A number of Swifts which we banded have been recaptured elsewhere—two in Minnesota, one in Tennessee, and one in Louisiana. A junco was captured at Martin, North Dakota, two weeks after it was banded here. Two Red-tailed Hawks were banded as fledglings from a nest in a tall tree on Decoration Day, 1934. Exactly six months later one of them was shot at Cuero, Texas.

One phase of the zoological work carried on at Parsons College has thrown a little light on the fate of some of the banded birds. For about two years Mr. McDonald collected owl pellets in the vicinity of the station and elsewhere, for the purpose of studying the food habits of owls in this region. From a group of Barred Owl pellets the band of a junco was recovered. The following year pellets yielded the bands of three Blue Jays and five Bob-whites. Mr. McDonald had a ringside seat at one of the Bob-white disappearances. He banded the bird, at just about dusk, and had released it. Suddenly the whirl of wings ceased, the bird gave a little sharp cry of pain, and no more was heard. Going over the territory on the following morning, a few Bob-white feathers were discovered near the place where the victim had disappeared. After the snow melted and pellet-collecting operations were resumed, the band was recovered.

From the above paragraph it would appear that an owl in the vicinity of a banding station is a menace to the birds, but this is not actually the case. The Bob-whites were taken during a blizzard week when there was a particularly heavy concentration of Bob-whites in the park; 59 individuals were banded within a week in the few acres of woodland where they had taken refuge from the surrounding fields. A study of the food habits of the owls in the vicinity has shown that they are considerably more beneficial than harmful. As an example, permit me to cite the case of one Long-eared Owl which resided in the cemetery near the banding station from December, 1933, to March, 1934. During that time all pellets from this owl were collected and the contained bones identified. The results, when totaled, showed that during the approximately three-month-long period, this owl had eaten



355 destructive field mice and shrews, and had taken, in the same period, only three birds, and one of these was an English Sparrow.

Other high spots of the years of banding are: the Coot that mistook the Library lawn for a body of water, was captured, banded, deloused, measured and weighed before being released; the cormorant which flew into an automobile's headlights and after having been banded was released to be shot at Dallas City, Illinois, a month later; a seemingly healthy and thriving Downy Woodpecker with only one leg; another Downy which laid an egg in the woodpecker trap; a Golden-crowned Kinglet so tangled in beggar's-lice that it was picked up, unable to fly; a Brown Thrasher captured and banded three weeks after the "last" migrating thrasher had been seen; and the House Wren that was rescued from a cat and found to be a return from the previous year.

#### BANDING ACTIVITIES, WINTER OF 1935-1936

The banding season of 1935-1936 has brought many things of interest to light in bird-banding at our local station.

In my study of owl pellets in the region of the banding station, I have thus far found only one bird band since September, 1935. This band had been placed on a Bob-white. However, the owl did not stay in the locality of the traps during the entire winter.

The past winter was so extremely cold that banding brought very few records during January and February. After the cold seemed to have left, I secured all data that I could on birds that died during the winter in the vicinity of the banding station. I found four Blue Jays, all of which seemed to have frozen, and not starved. The loss of birds by being killed in the traps was high. Practically all found dead in the traps had been killed by some animal of prey—probably a cat or a weasel.

During the past year I have added three new species to the list of those previously banded. They are: Winter Wren, Philadelphia Vireo, and Cedar Waxwing. I have banded a total of 24 species since last fall, of which the White-throated Sparrow leads in number with 224 individuals being banded. The Slate-colored Junco falls second in line with a total of 150. A total of 570 individuals have been banded during the period from September to May. Ten individuals have returned from previous banding seasons. A total of 19 met death in the traps, most of which were killed by animals seeking food during the extreme winter. At present there are 14 traps of 6 types in operation at the station.—WESLEY H. BARTLETT.

#### GENERAL NOTES

**The Starling in the 99th Iowa County.**—I had been watching for Starlings on each drive through Osceola County, but I had not seen any up to the time Mr. Youngworth reported having driven about the county looking for them (Iowa Bird Life, VI, p. 7). Early in April, Mrs. Thomas and I drove about Osceola County without results. On April 22, 1936, while driving on highway 59 in Osceola County, slightly less than a mile north of the O'Brien County line, I saw two Starlings fly across the road in front of the car. While this may not be the first occurrence of the birds in the county, it is the earliest reported record for Osceola and finishes the county list of Starling occurrences in Iowa.—O. S. THOMAS, Rock Rapids, Iowa.

**The Arkansas Kingbird in Southern Iowa.**—The first Arkansas Kingbird observed by the author in the spring of 1936 was seen near Woodland, in Decatur County, on April 5. These birds were often seen during the remainder of April. On May 12, while in company with W. E. Green, a single Arkansas Kingbird was observed. On May 24,

while driving with John Estes near Lineville, Iowa, two Arkansas Kingbirds were seen, and on May 25 one bird was observed for several minutes at a distance of 30 feet. This bird was carefully identified. Although no positive evidence of nesting was found, the presence of the birds this late in the season seems to indicate that there may be a few Arkansas Kingbirds that nest in southern Iowa.—WATSON E. BEED, Dept. of Zoology and Entomology, Iowa State College.

**Wilson Phalaropes Nesting in Iowa.**—On June 23, 1936, Dr. George O. Hendrickson and Dr. H. H. Knight of the Zoology and Entomology Department of Iowa State College and the author made a visit to Dewey's Pasture and Barringer's Slough in Clay County. In the course of making duck observations in Dewey's Pasture two pairs of Wilson Phalaropes were seen. The actions of these birds assured us that they were nesting near by. This tract of 392 acres was purchased by the Conservation Commission in 1934 for waterfowl restoration purposes. It is indeed encouraging to know that in restoring areas for ducks suitable habitats are also restored for such birds as the Wilson Phalarope. Three miles south of Dewey's Pasture is a tract of 1570 acres known as Barringer's Slough. Two male and three female Wilson Phalaropes were observed there. The actions of these birds also betrayed their nesting activities.—LOGAN J. BENNETT, U. S. Biological Survey, Ames, Iowa.

**A Battle of the 'Speed Demons' of the Air.**—On the forenoon of July 11, with temperature soaring around the 100-degree mark, I heard a rather unusual disturbance over our house. Glancing up I saw a flock of at least a dozen Chimney Swifts that were attacking a Sharp-shinned Hawk. The unusual thing about it was that the swifts, otherwise known as rather defenseless and harmless birds, were on the offensive and one after another would swoop down at the hawk. As the swift was about to strike, the hawk would swerve in the air in defense in the usual hawk fashion, and there would be a harsh cry which I presumed came from the hawk. These evolutions and gyrations high in the air were certainly a demonstration of speed to the highest degree, for where do we find speedsters that exceed these two birds in the air? The hawk seemed intent only on eluding the swifts, and it was the finest demonstration of speed I have ever witnessed. The last I saw of them was when they disappeared to the north, with the swifts all in mad pursuit of the hawk.—W. M. ROSENE, Ogden.

**Spring Birds in Eastern Iowa.**—The territory near Cedar Rapids affords opportunity for a wide study of birds, as one is able to find through the seasons most of the birds listed for this part of Iowa. Occasionally unusual species are to be seen. One of my best records for the past two years was a Sycamore Warbler seen near Cedar Rapids on May 16, 1935. On May 25, 1935, I observed three Ruddy Turnstones on Swan Lake in Johnson County. They were busily feeding and were not disturbed by our rather close approach as were the Killdeer which were near them. The next day several Semipalmated Plovers joined them. I saw a Red-backed Sandpiper at Clear Lake on June 7, 1935. This past spring (1936), on a visit to the Conesville Marshes near Conesville on March 28, I saw five Black Ducks among hundreds of the more common species of ducks. On Swan Lake, April 11, 1936, I observed two Western Grebes also with a varied group of ducks. When I visited the lake next morning they were gone. On May 24, 1936, I flushed a Black-bellied Plover from the edge of Swan Lake.—(MISS) LILLIAN SERBOUSEK, Cedar Rapids.



## RECENT BIRD BOOKS

UPLAND GAME BIRDS IN IOWA, by Thomas G. Scott and George O. Hendrickson (Extension Circular 228, Iowa State College, Ames, June, 1936; pp. 1-32, illustrated; available free).

In this publication we are given an excellent outline of the various upland game birds in Iowa. There is a general description of the requirements to be met in providing suitable habitat for game birds, with especial stress placed upon the feeding of the birds in winter. The discussion of game bird management is not lengthy, but the reader will find that much useful information has been condensed into a convenient form. The Ring-necked Pheasant, European Partridge, Bob-white, Wild Turkey and Ruffed Grouse are described individually, with little incidents of their habits and mannerisms making the chapters educational as well as entertaining reading. The Prairie Sharp-tailed Grouse and the Prairie Chicken are mentioned as possibilities in the list of Iowa game birds. An attractive crayon sketch by the new Iowa artist, Sid Horn, accompanies the account of each bird. This bulletin will be given a wide distribution and will aid very materially the State's program of replenishing the supply of game birds—a program that should have the hearty approval of the public.—F. J. P.

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THE NORTHERN BOB-WHITE'S WINTER TERRITORY, by Paul L. Errington and F. N. Hamerstrom, Jr. (Research Bulletin 201, Iowa State College, Ames, June, 1936; pp. 301-443, illustrated; available free).

The bulletin reviewed above is written in a popular, non-technical style, for the instruction of the general public. The present bulletin, quite as important, has an entirely different make-up and is intended for professional game managers and those persons having a serious interest in game management. During the Iowa Wildlife Research Program, established by Iowa State College and the Iowa Fish and Game Commission, 1932 to 1935, much important data were collected, especially by the senior author of this bulletin. Dr. Errington's work on the Bob-white in Iowa is well known, and he is noted for being an accurate, painstaking, and thoroughly-trained scientist. His thoroughness is shown by the great amount of detailed information given in this publication. The material is arranged in four divisions: (Part I) Introductory remarks and technique; (Part II) Survival data; (Part III) Analysis of carrying capacity; (Part IV) Management of the Bob-white's winter territory. Within these sections is given the entire Bob-white management procedure—from the methods of counting the birds, down through the studies of wintering birds, showing how their numbers are reduced through natural and other causes and just what the carrying capacity for a given area will be, with a description of food and cover necessities. The section on management shows what can be accomplished by applying the latest scientific methods, with especial reference to the correlation of soil erosion control, farming practices and game management. The broad subject of Bob-white management is well covered in this publication, and the methods evolved through studies made under the Iowa Research Program will be of service to workers in many regions.—F. J. P.

## THE NEW IOWA CHECK-LIST

Mr. Rosene has revised the Union's "Field Checking List" to conform with the present A. O. U. Check-list, and the Union has had 5000 copies printed. It is on a 3 by 5-inch card, convenient for filing, and has the same useful features of the old list, which has been out of print for some time. It is available at the following prices: 500, \$2.15; 100, 50c; 50 or less, 1/2c each; all orders sent postpaid. Orders should be sent to Miss Kate LaMar, 1231 Thirty-ninth St., Des Moines, Iowa.

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

New members are: Watson E. Beed, Ames; Miss Ila M. Glotfelty, Fairfield; Mrs. Ernest W. Hanson, Burlington; Ethan A. Hemsley, Dubuque; Miss Roberta B. Loudon, Fairfield. New subscribers are: Don L. Walters, Independence, Mo.; Jack W. Sherwood, Salinas, Calif.; Mrs. H. J. Taylor, Berkeley, Calif.; Public Library, Fort Dodge, Iowa.

Miss Kate LaMar, who is President of the Des Moines Audubon Society as well as our Secretary-Treasurer, spent several weeks of the summer at the newly-established Audubon Nature Camp at the Todd Wild Life Sanctuary, Muscongus Bay, Maine, as a special delegate from Des Moines. This unique nature session has been well described in recent issues of 'Bird-Lore'. Her stay was delightful and she reports a very educational trip. The diversified bird and plant life of Maine, both much different from ours, furnished a great deal of pleasure, while contact with the instructors, many of whom are eminent scientists, was a genuine inspiration. The itinerary of Miss LaMar's trip included a visit to American Museum of Natural History in New York City, Harvard Museum in Cambridge, Field Museum in Chicago, and points of interest in and near Boston, Montreal, Toronto and Detroit. We shall expect to hear about her experiences when we meet at Cedar Falls next May.

During June, Wm. Youngworth visited the Waubay Lake country of northeastern South Dakota, then called on Mr. and Mrs. Philip DuMont at the Sand Lake Refuge near Aberdeen. After that he spent a week with Walter Bennett in western Nebraska, near the Colorado line, where the men enjoyed work with nesting birds of the region.

Mr. Rosene had charge of the ornithology classes at the Wild Life School, McGregor, during August. He reports that early bird hikes were taken every morning, and as many as 30 and 40 bird enthusiasts were present. They had a total bird list of 85 species, including the American Egret and Ruffed Grouse.

A doctorate in zoology was awarded to Miss Winifred Gilbert by the University of Iowa in the past summer. Congratulations to our Vice-President!

John Bliese, who recently received a Master's degree from Columbia University in New York City, is the new science teacher in the Cedar Falls high school. He is a graduate of Iowa State Teachers College and a member of our Union.

Walter Rosene, Jr., was given a scholarship by the Alabama Polytechnic Institute of Auburn, Alabama, and early in the summer he began work there. He is continuing his study of the Mourning Dove, which was the basis of his recent work at Iowa State College.

## THE OOLOGIST

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